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Book Review

Compte rendu de livre

Exotic Small Mammal Care and Husbandry

Banks RE, Sharp JM, Doss SD, Vanderford DA. Wiley-Blackwell Publishing, Ames, Iowa, USA. 2010. 192 pp. ISBN 9780-8138-1022-5. \$59.99.

This book is written for veterinary technicians or veterinarians desiring in-depth information on the care and prevention of disease in small mammals. In addition, it also provides some basic information on the most common diseases occurring in a variety of caged pets. The information provided would be useful to clinicians and technicians in private practice or for those in a research setting.

The first chapter provides detailed information on intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting the well-being of caged pets, including topics such as age, gender, genetics, temperature/humidity, ventilation, and illumination. The second chapter focuses on enrichment strategies for common caged pets such as rodents (including mice, rats, hamster, gerbils, and degus), rabbits, guinea pigs, sugar gliders, and hedgehogs. Tables are provided that include normal behaviors that should be considered in the development of an overall strategy of enrichment. The authors also provide specific examples of items that can be used for each species to provide environmental enrichment. The third chapter is devoted to a discussion on common zoonotic

diseases of importance in small mammals. Details, such as agent, reservoir and incidence, diagnosis, disease in animals, disease in humans, transmission, and prevention/control are listed for each disease discussed. The remaining chapters of the book each focus on a specific small mammal. Rabbits, ferrets, mice, rats, gerbils, hamsters, guinea pigs, chinchillas, degus, hedgehogs, sugar gliders, and opossums are covered in this book. Basic anatomy and physiology, reproduction, husbandry, nutrition, enrichment, handling/restraint, physical examinations, clinical techniques, preventive health, and common diseases are covered for each of the above-mentioned animals. A basic formulary and clinical pathologic reference values are provided as well.

The main strengths of this book lie in the first three chapters, which provide much information in the husbandry and enrichment of small mammals. Readers desiring more detailed information on common disease conditions and treatments would do better to find another reference source, although at the end of each “animal-specific” chapter, a list of references for further information is provided. There are some color plates and images, though they do little to add to the book. Overall, this book is a useful reference for those veterinarians or technicians working with small mammals.

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